

Washington, DC -- Congressman Vern Buchanan (R-FL 13) voted today in favor of two lobby reform bills that require greater disclosure of lobbying practices. H.R. 2316 and H.R. 2317 passed the House with bipartisan support.

“These bills increase disclosure requirements and strengthen rules governing the relationships of lobbyists and Members of Congress,” said Buchanan. “Although they represent an improvement over the status quo, they do not do enough to reform the process, increase transparency and strengthen ethical standards. I will continue to work with Republicans and Democrats in Congress to enact common sense reforms and restore public trust in government.”

H.R. 2317, the “Lobbying Transparency Act,” would require lobbyists who bundle campaign contributions they solicit on behalf of a candidate to report every donation they secure. This bill passed the House by a vote of 382 to 37.

Among other things, H.R. 2316, the “Honest Leadership and Open Government Act” would create a new set of lobbying disclosure laws. These include requiring lobbyists to file quarterly disclosure reports; establishing an electronic database of lobbying records; forcing lobbying coalitions to disclose their membership; banning the so-called ‘K Street Project’ and, increasing civil and criminal penalties for violating lobbying rules.

Both bills must now be reconciled with similar rule changes approved by the Senate.

In January, Buchanan helped the House pass a sweeping ethics and lobbying package. Under the new rules, House members can no longer allow a lobbyist to buy them lunch, and members of Congress will not be able to take privately funded trips without prior approval of the ethics committee. The Congressman also voted to deny taxpayer-funded pensions to Members of Congress convicted of felonies related to their Congressional service.

Buchanan is the author of earmark reform legislation to ban last minute, backroom deals and grant the President a constitutional line-item veto to reduce spending and prevent abuse.